

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of the claims replaces all earlier listings and all earlier versions.

1. (Currently amended) A confectionery product comprising:

(i) a salivation region comprising an acidulent in an amount effective to aid in the stimulation of the flow of saliva in an oral cavity and a salivation region confectionery base that is a sugar base or a sugarless base; and

(ii) an oral comfort region comprising an oral comfort ingredient selected from the group consisting of lipids, surfactants and mixtures thereof in an amount effective to lubricate, coat or moisten said oral cavity and an oral comfort region confectionery base that is a sugar base or a sugarless base,

wherein the lipid is selected from the group consisting of partially hydrogenated palm kernel oil, medium chain triglycerides, coconut oil, anhydrous milk fat, cocoa butter, corn oil, palm oil, soybean oil, sunflower oil, canola oil and mixtures thereof,

wherein the salivation region and the oral comfort region each have a surface on the exterior of the product,

wherein the acidulent is not uniformly distributed throughout the product but is concentrated in the salivation region, and the oral comfort ingredient is concentrated in the oral comfort region,

wherein the confectionery product is a hard candy, and

wherein the confectionery product comprises about 50 to about 99.5 percent by weight confectionery base.

2. (Original) The confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein said salivation region confectionery base and said oral comfort region confectionery base are sugar bases.

3. (Original) The confectionery product according to claim 2, wherein said sugar bases comprises a sugar selected from the group consisting of sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, corn syrup and mixtures thereof.

4. (Original) The confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein said salivation region confectionery base and said oral comfort region confectionery base are sugarless bases.

5. (Previously Presented) The confectionery product according to claim 4, wherein said sugarless bases are selected from the group consisting of isomalt, erythritol, hydrogenated starch hydrolysates, sorbitol, xylitol, mannitol and mixtures thereof.

6. (Cancelled).

7. (Previously presented) A confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein said acidulent is selected from the group consisting of citric acid, malic acid, succinic acid, adipic acid and mixtures thereof.

8. (Previously presented) The confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein said acidulent is present in an amount from about 0.01% to about 4% by weight of the confectionery product.

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Previously Presented) The confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein said oral comfort ingredient is a lipid.

11. (Original) A confectionery product according to claim 10, wherein said lipid is present in an amount of about 1 to about 20% by weight of the confectionery product.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently amended) The confectionery product according to claim 10, wherein said oral comfort region further comprises a surfactant selected from the group consisting of nonionic surfactants, anionic surfactants and amphoteric surfactants.

14. (Original) The confectionery product according to claim 13, wherein said surfactant is present in an amount of about 0.5 percent to about 4 percent by weight of said oral comfort region.

15. (Original) The confectionery product according to claim 1, wherein said salivation region comprises an acidulent and a cooling compound.

16. (Original) The confectionery product according to claim 15, wherein said cooling compound is present in an amount of about 0.01 to 0.2 % by weight of the confectionery product.

17. (Currently amended) A method of preparing a hard candy confectionery product having a salivation region and an oral comfort region that is separate and distinct from said salivation region, said method comprising the steps of:

(i) mixing an acidulent with a salivation region confectionery base that is a sugar base or a sugarless base to form a salivation agent containing confectionery base;

(ii) mixing an oral comfort ingredient selected from the group consisting of lipids, surfactants and mixtures thereof with an oral comfort region confectionery base that is a sugar base or a sugarless base to form an oral comfort ingredient containing confectionery base, wherein the lipid is selected from the group consisting of partially hydrogenated palm kernel oil, medium chain triglycerides, coconut oil, anhydrous milk fat, cocoa butter, corn oil, palm oil, soybean oil, sunflower oil, canola oil and mixtures thereof; and

(iii) forming said hard candy confectionery product with said salivation agent containing confectionery base and said oral comfort ingredient containing confectionery base in a manner that maintains said salivation agent containing confectionery base and said oral comfort ingredient containing confectionery base in separate and distinct regions of said confectionery product,

wherein the salivation region and the oral comfort region each have a surface on the exterior of the product, and

wherein the product comprises about 50 to about 99.5 percent by weight confectionery base.

18. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein said step of forming comprises substantially simultaneously depositing said acidulent containing confectionery base and said oral comfort ingredient containing confectionery base in separate and distinct regions of a confectionery mold.

19. (Original) The method according to claim 18, wherein said confectionery mold has a raised ridge running along its bottom inner surface that defines said separate and distinct regions of said confectionery mold.

20. (Currently amended) A method for treating xerostomia, which comprises:

introducing into the oral cavity a hard candy confectionery product containing:

an acidulent concentrated in a salivation region of said product in a salivation agent confectionery base which is a sugar base or a sugarless base, and

an oral comfort ingredient, selected from the group consisting of lipids, surfactants and mixtures thereof, concentrated in an oral comfort region of said product in an oral comfort ingredient confectionery base which is a sugar base or a sugarless base, wherein the lipid is selected from the group consisting of partially hydrogenated palm kernel oil, medium chain triglycerides, coconut oil, anhydrous milk fat, cocoa butter, corn oil, palm oil, soybean oil, sunflower oil, canola oil and mixtures thereof,

wherein said salivation region and said oral comfort region each have a surface on the exterior of the product, and

wherein the hard candy confectionery product comprises about 50 to about 99.5 percent by weight confectionery base.

21. (Previously amended) A method according to claim 20, wherein said salivation region comprises the acidulent in combination with a cooling compound.

22. (Cancelled).

23. (Currently amended) A hard candy confectionery product comprising:

(i) a salivation region comprising (a) an acidulent in an amount effective to aid in the stimulation of the flow of saliva in an oral cavity and (b) a salivation region confectionery base selected from either (1) the group consisting of sucrose, glucose,

fructose, maltose, corn syrup, and mixtures thereof, or (2) the group consisting of isomalt, erythritol, hydrogenated starch hydrolysates, sorbitol, xylitol, mannitol and mixtures thereof; and

(ii) an oral comfort region comprising (c) an oral comfort ingredient selected from the group consisting of lipids, surfactants and mixtures thereof in an amount effective to lubricate, coat or moisten said oral cavity, wherein the lipid is selected from the group consisting of partially hydrogenated palm kernel oil, medium chain triglycerides, coconut oil, anhydrous milk fat, cocoa butter, corn oil, palm oil, soybean oil, sunflower oil, canola oil and mixtures thereof, and (d) an oral comfort region confectionery base selected from either (1) the group consisting of sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, corn syrup, and mixtures thereof, or (2) the group consisting of isomalt, erythritol, hydrogenated starch hydrolysates, sorbitol, xylitol, mannitol and mixtures thereof,

wherein the salivation region and the oral comfort region each have a surface on the exterior of the product,

wherein the acidulent is not uniformly distributed throughout the product but is concentrated in the salivation region, and

wherein the oral comfort ingredient is concentrated in the oral comfort region.

24. (Currently amended) A confectionery product comprising:

(i) a salivation region comprising an acidulent in an amount effective to aid in the stimulation of the flow of saliva in an oral cavity and a salivation region confectionery base which is a sugarless base or a sugar base; and

(ii) an oral comfort region comprising an oral comfort ingredient selected from the group consisting of ~~lipids and surfactants~~ partially hydrogenated palm kernel oil, medium chain triglycerides, coconut oil, anhydrous milk fat, cocoa butter, corn oil, palm oil, soybean oil, sunflower oil, canola oil and mixtures thereof in an amount effective to lubricate, coat or moisten said oral cavity and an oral comfort region confectionery base which is a sugarless base or a sugar base,

wherein the salivation region and the oral comfort region each have a surface on the exterior of the product,

wherein the acidulent is not uniformly distributed throughout the product but is concentrated in the salivation region to cause movement of the product in the oral cavity, and the oral comfort ingredient is concentrated in the oral comfort region,

wherein about 50 to about 99.5 percent by weight of the product is confectionery base, and

wherein the confectionery is a hard candy.

25.-27. (Cancelled)

28. (New) The confectionery product of claim 24, wherein the salivation region contains an acidulent and a cooling compound.